



April 2002

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Council Passes Citywide Streetlight Conversion To White Lights

My top priority as a City Councilmember is to improve the aging infrastructure that serves our older, urban communities in District Three. I'm pleased to report two major Council victories that will help improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to our district.

In a bold move to create safer streets for pedestrians and drivers, the Mayor and four fellow councilmembers joined me in late February in voting to convert the City's yellow, low pressure sodium (LPS) street lights to white, high pressure sodium (HPS) ones.



Solar-powered streetlights, like the one currently in place on Oregon Street between Meade and Monroe avenues, are one energy-saving option being looked at under the City's new streetlight policy.

As chair of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee I had been advocating for this conversion since the middle of last year, and was pleased to receive the early support of Mayor Murphy. Joining us in approving the measure were Councilmembers Byron Wear, George Stevens, Jim Madaffer and Ralph Inzunza. In opposition were Councilmembers Scott Peters, Brian Maienschein, and Donna Frye.

Residents I've spoken with over the years have told me they feel that with white lights it's easier to distinguish color, more inviting for people to come out at night, and it makes them feel more secure in their communities. I've always maintained if I can do anything that makes people feel safer in their neighborhoods, then I will do it, and this should help achieve that goal.

The conversion to white lights will be prioritized by crime statistics, traffic counts, proximity to schools and parks, population density and community requests.

Opponents of the white light conversion have long contended that such an action would dramatically decrease visibility of the night-time sky, thus hindering astronomical ventures of nearby Mount Palomar Observatory. In direct response to these concerns, the Council measure excludes any part of the City that is within 30 miles of Mount Palomar, including Rancho Bernardo, Sabre Springs, and part of Rancho Peñasquitos.

To further address these concerns, the measure calls for the installation of full cutoff fixtures when the lights in cobra-style fixtures are replaced. This fully shields the light at the top, casting all of their light downward, thereby minimizing light pollution and getting more light on the street. Additionally, all new acorn-style fixtures will have semi-cutoff features.

As part of the plan, the City Manager has been directed to continue to pursue energy-saving initiatives currently underway, including, solar-powered lights like the ones currently being installed in some locations by the North Park Landscape, Lighting and Maintenance District, and light emitting diode (LED) powered lights. The City will also continue working on refining and implementing policies in the City's Street Design Manual, including use of cutoff fixtures.

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FUN DOWN UNDER

Council Approves \$40 Million Annual Injection to Undergrounding Program

I'm pleased to also report the second major infrastructure victory for our older, urban communities: more undergrounding of unsightly utility lines in our neighborhoods!

The City Council's recent approval of the renegotiation of the 50-year franchise agreement the City has with San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) is a big first step in quadrupling the annual

funding allocation to \$40 million for undergrounding of utility lines. Electric (SDG&E) is a big first step in quadrupling the annual funding allocation to \$40 million for undergrounding of utility lines.



The Council recently approved a measure to create \$40 million in funding for undergrounding of utilities. Shown is the current undergrounding project along 30th Street in North Park.

As some of you may be aware, the original agreement with SDG&E called for a renegotiation of terms at the 30th year of the contract. Unlike past City Councils, this Council felt it our duty to honor the original agreement to underground that which was whittled away during the last three decades. The new terms will allow the City to ramp up from about 10 miles of undergrounding a year to almost 40 miles a year! This is great news for our older urban neighborhoods.

The next step is for the agreement to be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). If the renegotiation is approved by the CPUC, funds from the surcharge will be paid to the City and accounted for in a separate fund just for undergrounding. In the near future we will be enlisting the help of our communities to lobby the CPUC for approval of our undergrounding program. We will need your letters of support to help make this a reality.

Included in the new council policy as allowable expenditures are pavement resurfacing, street light conversions, customer lateral conversions, environmental monitoring and City construction management. Finally, the Council has asked that the Community Planning Groups take the lead on prioritizing projects for their communities.

By increasing the amount of undergrounding throughout the City of San Diego, we will be able to improve safety for our residents, remove the visual blight of the wires and restore our communities to neighborhoods we can be proud of. If you should have any further questions regarding the undergrounding program, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (619) 236-6633.

GEORGIA STREET BRIDGE REPAIRS

Good news for those of you who live near or travel under or over the historic Georgia Street Bridge. Repair work to the facade of the north retaining wall of the bridge began April 9th, and will continue for approximately 40 working days until the first week of June.

These temporary repairs will patch up the gaping holes that have formed recently, exposing the rebar underneath and causing a hazard to motorists. The repairs will also include a complete smoothing and resurfacing of the northern facade to blend in the repaired areas which are quite substantial with the rest of the wall.

The westbound lane (closest to the northern wall) will need to be closed during certain periods of the project.



Exposed rebar and a crumbling facade (right) has prompted the repair of the north facade of the Georgia Street Bridge (left).

CITY HONORS COMMUNITY HERO MARK KASSAB

One of the more satisfying aspects of my job is when I get to honor individuals and organizations in my district who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in serving their community. And every once in a while you're fortunate enough to come across an individual so selfless, kind and generous, that you really must find the time to stop, take notice, and pay tribute to their good deeds in a very public manner. That is why I, along with the Mayor and City Council, was pleased to pay tribute to one such community hero when we proclaimed April 2, 2002, to be "Mark Kassab Day" in the City of San Diego.

Mark is one of those special individuals who embodies the phrase "giving back to the community." The list of Mark's contributions and service to the community could fill this newsletter. In short, since the late 1980s Mark has established a long history of community support for educational institutions, athletic programs, and community organizations in Mid-City.

Along the way he has adopted local schools to assist with their special needs, including purchasing over 3,000 books for at Rosa Parks Elementary School, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School

and Marion Green Elementary School as part of Read Across America.

Mark also sits on the school site councils at Rosa Parks Elementary School and Hamilton Elementary School, and he sponsors the Parents Room at Rosa Parks Elementary. He also sponsors an annual Halloween party at Rosa Parks Elementary School, providing a safe environment for over 2,000 children.



Mark Kassab (fourth from left) receives his proclamation from Councilmember Atkins. Pictured with Mark and Toni are members of Mark's family and community members.

Mark has donated refreshments to thousands of community members who have attended such diverse events as the grand opening of the Mid-City Police Substation in the City Heights Urban Village, Neighborhood Housing Services' "Facelift" events, and the National Night Out community crime-fighting rally.

Mark also currently sponsors one neighborhood soccer team and two school soccer teams at Rosa Parks Elementary School, where he will soon sponsor an additional local girls soccer team. He also sponsored a Little League team in North Park in 1997.

In 2001, Mark opened the City Heights Chevron gasoline station, car wash and convenience store at I-15 and University Avenue the first new business associated with the I-15 business nodes at University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Mark even permits local organizations to use the car wash for fund-raisers on weekends. In fact, in one weekend alone, he and community members raised over \$2,800 for the 9/11 Victims Relief Fund.

DISTRICT THREE ESSAY AND POSTER CONTEST WINNERS HONORED

On Friday, April 12th, I was pleased to honor the winners of the District Three Essay and Poster Contest at an awards assembly at St. Patrick's School in North Park.

I asked sixth graders to compose an essay and third graders to create a poster on the topic "San Diego: A City of Villages." When Mayor Murphy and I were sworn in at our inauguration ceremony back in December of 2000, the Mayor assigned each councilmember one of his Top 10 Goals for the City. I was given goal #3—which is "Creating Neighborhoods We Can Be Proud Of." This ties in directly with the City's long-range plan to create a "City of Villages" from the collection of unique neighborhoods for which San Diego is famous, and I felt this was the perfect topic for my first essay and poster contest. Over 230 essays and posters were submitted.

contest. Two students from Edison Elementary School in City Heights, Christal Moua and Mohamed Ahmed Hassan, were awarded second and third place, respectively, and Tammy Pham, also of Franklin Elementary, was given fourth-place honors.

Awards were given for the top four essays and posters submitted district-wide. The grand prize winners in each competition were awarded Gateway Computers donated by the Waite Family Foundation, which was represented at the awards assembly by Christian Crews, Director of Future Studies. Second through fourth place winners were presented with \$100, \$75, and \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds, respectively, donated by California Bank & Trust in Hillcrest. The plaques which were also presented to each of the winners were underwritten by Sempra Energy and Time Warner Cable. Time Warner also underwrote the cost of refreshments for the panel of 15 judges who convened at the Art Produce Art Gallery and Studio in North Park to judge the entrants. Winners also received commendations from Mayor Dick Murphy which were presented by his Council District Three liaison, Robert Young.

Each year we've had the District Three Essay and Poster Contest, we've been fortunate that the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has stepped up to the plate and worked in conjunction with SANYO to provide a television to the school attended by the winning essayist. Andrea Moser of EDC was on hand to present the television to St. Patrick's School Principal Dan O'Neal.

Individual winners in both the essay and poster contest were also chosen from each school, and they were presented with special District Three commendations along with two passes to the Mingei International Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art, and the Museum of Photographic Arts. And, as in years past, for each student who submitted a poster or an essay, Ben and Jerry's on University Avenue in Hillcrest has donated a free ice cream cone. So everyone is a winner.

Congratulations to all the winners, and special thanks to this year's sponsors.



Councilmember Atkins with the winners and sponsors of the District Three Essay and Poster Contest. Pictured: (top row, left to right) Atkins, Andrea Moser of San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, Mark Best (1st place, essay), Liz Organ, (2nd place, essay), Robert Young of Mayor Dick Murphy's Office, Christian Crews of the Waite Family Foundation. (Seated, left to right) Tammy Pham (4th place, poster), Mohamed Ahmed Hassan (3rd place, poster), Amanda Parsons (3rd place, essay), Cristall Rios (1st place, poster) and Christal Moua (2nd place, poster). Not pictured: Gladys Moreno (4th place, essay).